

What is claimed is:

1. A method of offering to a user by way of the Internet an optimum route when a plurality of sites are to be visited; said method comprising steps of:

5 storing in advance map information that includes information regarding the time required to travel on roads on a map;

10 receiving, by way of said Internet, site information that is information indicating a plurality of sites that are to be visited, and storing said site information;

15 obtaining, by way of said Internet, site-to-site information that includes information regarding real-time traffic conditions of said roads, and storing said site-to-site information;

extracting an optimum route for visiting a plurality of said sites in the shortest time based on said map information, said site information, and said site-to-site information; and

20 reporting the extracted optimum route to said user by way of said Internet.

2. A method of offering to a user by way of the Internet an optimum route when a plurality of sites are to be visited, said method comprising steps of:

storing in advance map information that

includes information regarding distances along roads on a map;

receiving, by way of said Internet, site information that includes information indicating a plurality of sites that are to be visited, and storing said site information;

obtaining, by way of said Internet, site-to-site information that includes information regarding real-time traffic conditions of said roads, and storing said site-to-site information;

extracting an optimum route for visiting a plurality of said sites by the shortest distance based on said map information, said site information, and said site-to-site information; and

reporting the extracted optimum route to said user by way of said Internet.

3. A method according to claim 1, wherein said site information includes the location of departure of said user, the location of each of said sites, and designated delivery time blocks, which are time blocks in which articles are to be delivered to said sites that are set according to necessity;

and wherein said step of extracting an optimum route extracts a route for visiting said sites that starts from said location of departure and arrives at

sites in said designated delivery time blocks that have been set.

4. A method according to claim 2, wherein said
5 site information includes the location of departure of said user, the location of each of said sites, and designated delivery time blocks, which are time blocks in which articles are to be delivered to said sites that are set according to necessity;

10 and wherein said step of extracting an optimum route extracts a route for visiting said sites that starts from said location of departure and arrives at sites in said designated delivery time blocks that have been set.

15 5. A method according to claim 1, wherein said step of extracting an optimum route uses, in the extraction of an optimum route, said site information and site-to-site information that are stored and that have
20 been used in a previous extraction of an optimum route.

6. A method according to claim 2, wherein said step of extracting an optimum route uses, in the extraction of an optimum route, said site information and site-to-site information that are stored and that have
25 been used in a previous extraction of an optimum route.

7. A method according to claim 1, wherein said step of extracting an optimum route extracts an optimum route that does not pass by way of a road having a traffic blockage, and moreover, that considers the time to travel by way of a road having alternating one-way traffic or congested traffic to be a prescribed time greater than the travel time during normal conditions.

10 8. A method according to claim 2, wherein said step of extracting an optimum route extracts the optimum route having the shortest distance such that the route does not pass by way of a road having a traffic blockage.

15 9. A system for offering to a user by way of the Internet an optimum route when a plurality of sites are to be visited, said system comprising:
a route guidance device having means for storing in advance map information that includes
20 information regarding the time required to travel on roads on a map, means for receiving, by way of said Internet, site information, which is information indicating said sites that are to be visited and storing said site information, means for receiving, by way of
25 said Internet, site-to-site information that includes information regarding real-time traffic conditions of

5 said roads, and storing said site-to-site information, means for extracting an optimum route for visiting a plurality of said sites in the shortest time based on said map information, said site information, and said site-to-site information, and means for sending the information of said optimum route by way of said Internet;

10 a user terminal for producing at least a portion of said site information and sending site information to said route guidance device, and for receiving information of said optimum route that has been sent from said route guidance device; and

15 a traffic information-providing device for producing at least a portion of said site-to-site information and sending site-to-site information to said route guidance device.

10. A route guidance system for offering to a user by way of the Internet an optimum route when a plurality 20 of sites are to be visited, said system comprising:

25 a route guidance device having means for storing in advance map information that includes information regarding the distances along roads on a map, means for receiving, by way of said Internet, site information that includes information indicating said sites that are to be visited and storing said site

information, means for obtaining, by way of said Internet, site-to-site information that includes information regarding real-time traffic conditions of said roads and storing said site-to-site information, means for extracting an optimum route for visiting a plurality of said sites by the shortest distance based on said map information, said site information, and said site-to-site information; and means for sending the information of said optimum route by way of said Internet;

10 a user terminal for producing at least a portion of said site information and sending site information to said route guidance device, and for receiving information of said optimum route that has been sent from said route guidance device; and

15 a traffic information-providing device for producing at least a portion of said site-to-site information and sending site-to-site information to said route guidance device.

20 11. A system according to claim 9, wherein said site information includes the location of departure of said user, the location of each of said sites, and designated delivery time blocks, which are time blocks in which articles are to be delivered to said sites that are set according to necessity;

25 and wherein said means for extracting an

optimum route extracts an optimum route for visiting said sites that starts from said location of departure and arrives at sites in said designated delivery time blocks that have been set.

5

12. A system according to claim 10, wherein said site information includes the location of departure of said user, the location of each of said sites, and designated delivery time blocks, which are time blocks in 10 which articles are to be delivered to said sites that are set according to necessity;

and wherein said means for extracting an optimum route extracts an optimum route for visiting said sites that starts from said location of departure and 15 arrives at sites in said designated delivery time blocks that have been set.

13. A system according to claim 9, wherein said means for extracting an optimum route uses, in the extraction of an optimum route, said site information and site-to-site information that are stored and that have 20 been used in a previous extraction of an optimum route.

14. A system according to claim 10, wherein said means for extracting an optimum route uses, in the extraction of an optimum route, said site information and 25

site-to-site information that are stored and that have been used in a previous extraction of an optimum route.

15. A system according to claim 9, wherein said
5 means for extracting an optimum route extracts an optimum route that does not pass by way of a road having a traffic blockage, and moreover, considers the time to travel by way of a road having alternating one-way traffic or congested traffic to be a prescribed time
10 greater than the travel time during normal conditions.

16. A system according to claim 10, wherein said means for extracting an optimum route extracts the optimum route having the shortest distance such that the
15 route does not pass by way of a road having a traffic blockage.

17. A device for offering to a user by way of the Internet an optimum route when a plurality of sites are
20 to be visited; said device comprising:

a map information storage means for storing in advance map information that includes information regarding the time required to travel along roads on a map;

25 a site information storage means for storing site information, which is information indicating a

plurality of sites that are to be visited;

a site information-receiving means for receiving said site information by way of said Internet and storing said site information in said site
5 information storage means;

a site-to-site information storage means for storing site-to-site information that includes information regarding real-time traffic conditions of said roads;

10 a site-to-site information input means for obtaining said site-to-site information by way of said Internet and storing said site-to-site information in said site-to-site storage means; and

15 extracting an optimum route for visiting a plurality of said sites in the shortest time based on said map information, said site information, and said site-to-site information, and reporting the information of the optimum route to said user by way of said Internet.

20

18. A device for offering to a user by way of the Internet an optimum route when a plurality of sites are to be visited; said device comprising:

25 a map information storage means for storing in advance map information that includes information regarding the distances along roads on a map;

a site information storage means for storing site information, which is information indicating a plurality of sites that are to be visited;

5 a site information-receiving means for receiving said site information by way of said Internet and storing said site information in said site information storage means;

10 a site-to-site information storage means for storing site-to-site information that includes information regarding real-time traffic conditions of said roads;

15 a site-to-site information input means for obtaining said site-to-site information by way of said Internet and storing said site-to-site information in said site-to-site storage means; and

20 an optimum route extraction means for extracting an optimum route for visiting a plurality of said sites by the shortest distance based on said map information, said site information, and said site-to-site information, and reporting the information of the optimum route to said user by way of said Internet.

19. A computer program for enabling a computer to offer to a user by way of the Internet an optimum route when a plurality of sites are to be visited;

said computer program including software

commands for causing a computer to carry out prescribed operations; said prescribed operations comprising steps of:

receiving, by way of said Internet, site
5 information that is information indicating a plurality of sites that are to be visited, and storing said site information in a storage medium;

receiving, by way of said Internet, site-to-site information that includes information regarding
10 real-time traffic conditions of roads to be traveled along and storing said site-to-site information in a storage medium;

extracting an optimum route for visiting a plurality of said sites in the shortest time based on map
15 information that includes information regarding the time required to travel along roads on a map, said site information, and said site-to-site information; and reporting information of the extracted optimum route to said user by way of said Internet.

20

20. A computer program for enabling a computer to offer to a user by way of the Internet an optimum route when a plurality of sites are to be visited;

said computer program including software
25 commands for causing a computer to carry out prescribed operations; said prescribed operations comprising steps

of:

receiving, by way of said Internet, site information that is information indicating a plurality of sites that are to be visited, and storing said site
5 information in a storage medium;

receiving, by way of said Internet, site-to-site information that includes information regarding real-time traffic conditions of roads to be traveled along and storing said site-to-site information in a
10 storage medium;

extracting an optimum route for visiting a plurality of said sites by the shortest distance based on map information that includes information regarding distances along roads on a map, said site information,
15 and said site-to-site information; and

reporting information of the extracted optimum route to said user by way of said Internet.